

EDUCATION FOR ETHICAL LIVING:  
A MODEL FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY  
THROUGH CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN RITUAL AND LITURGY

A Professional Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the  
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
James N. Simpson  
May 1985

COPYRIGHT 1985  
JAMES NEIL SIMPSON  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

*This professional project, completed by*

JAMES NEIL SIMPSON

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty  
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

*Faculty Committee*

Allen J. Moore

Sam D. Rhodes

\_\_\_\_\_

Feb. 27, 1985  
Date

Joseph C. Hough  
Dean

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: A Traditioning Model	16
Story and Education	16
The Model	22
III. ETHICAL LIVING: A Look From Story Perspective	35
Why Story	35
The Story Perspective	39
IV. RITUAL AND LITURGY: Bringing the Story into the Present	53
Story in Ritual and Liturgy	53
Making the Story Present	55
V. CONCLUSION	68
BIBLIOGRAPHY	77

## ABSTRACT

My thesis is that Christian religious education is a significant model for doing pastoral ministry and that this model is an important way for forming good ethical living standards. The thread that pulls education and pastoring together is the central importance of story. Further, by making story central to the ministering model brings the Christian liturgy and rituals into the center of the ministering task. My task here is to develop a model that shows how Christian religious education, ethical living, and Christian liturgies and rituals come together to become a model of pastoral ministry.

The model has significant roots in two authors. Mary Elizabeth Moore provides a great deal of the "how" of the Christian religious education portion with her "traditioning" model of Christian religious education. Stanley Hauerwas plays a similar role for ethical living. The model uses Moore's theory pretty much intact and is based on but significantly different from Hauerwas' theory of character development. Where Moore has provided the "how", Hauerwas has provided the "why". Although John H. Westerhoff, III, had some influence on the section that deals with liturgy and ritual, I did not utilize his theory to any great extent.

This model is where education is done from the

perspective of story. The education's purpose is to creationally transform individuals, congregations, and the educating pastors in ways that they all might form ethically sound foundations for living in today's world. It is a model that brings Christian religious education, ethical living, and Christian liturgies and rituals together to provide for transformed lifestyles. It is also a model that attempts to focus on Christians as the people of God and not as individual sinners. The model of ministry proposed here is traditioning for character development throughout the church's entire life but most importantly through the church's rituals and liturgies.

## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

Struggling with ones call is a battle that can go on for a lifetime. The struggle is intensified by the chasm between Christ's call and the motivations that drive secular society. Much of North America is driven by a need to accumulate more material wealth. Maximization of profits gives corporations permission to exploit a vast portion of the worlds marginal people. The comfort and freedom present in this society has given its people permission to overlook and minimize other peoples strife. Although there is no realistic way for a majority of the worlds people to achieve North America's standard of living, it has been made the model for the entire world to achieve. Here in the United States our economic health is measured in terms of continuous growth that assumes unlimited resources. In reality the only way for this style of living to be maintained is through the exploitation of more and more of the world's marginal people.

Malcolm Warford put it this way:

We have been accustomed to presuming the unlimited capacity of the earth to expand in proportion to our demands. We have not yet confronted the need for control of exploding populations, the use of natural resources, and the masification of human beings in a collective society. The technological crisis is

intensified by the continuing threat of nuclear war, world hunger, and cultural crisis.<sup>1</sup>

How does one define ministry in this world? Is there a real chasm between the call of Jesus Christ that is found in the Bible and the way that life is lived here in the United states? Many have found ministerial answers in the pastoral role. Others have found answers in the role of Christian educators. These roles overlap in many ways; one can not really do either without being somehow involved with the other. In a very real sense, when one is doing Christian religious education that person is fulfilling an important part of the pastoral role. In the reverse sense, a person who is doing the pastoral role should be involved with Christian religious education. Of course these two models of ministry are not the only models but they do seem to be fundamental to the pastoring task of the church. Education and pastoring are two jobs that have long histories in the church.

The second question has been answered in many different ways. I find my life responding to several parts of Jesus' call with a special kind of response. Jesus told his listeners that loving God and loving ones neighbor were the two most important life guides. The redactors and editors of Luke use the Good Samaritan story to help their

---

<sup>1</sup>Malcolm Warford, The Necessary Illusion (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1976) p. 28.



readers to understand what and who the neighbor is. That story crosses national, ethnic, and religious boundaries in its telling. Those who assembled the Gospel of Matthew put a description of the Kingdom of God at its very apex. In that story one learns about the kind of behavior required for entrance into God's Kingdom. The crux is that if one helps the most marginal people in the world the helping person is serving the Lord. I see these stories together with most of the rest of the Bible as God's call, through Jesus Christ, to people of the Kingdom of God. The description at the beginning is a description of the world as I see it and that world does not reflect God's call as I understand it.

I have been plagued by the intuition that the educational model of ministry and the pastoral model of ministry could be combined into one significant model. This intuition also brought the insight that one of the goals of the church was to produce people with good ethical living standards. One author called the church the moral educator of its people. My intuition said that if a pastor were to take Christian religious education as a model for doing pastoral ministry the goal of producing people with good ethical living standards might be realized. The further fallout and maybe the hope is that helping people to have better ethical living standards will produce a world different than the one described above, one more in tune

with the call of Jesus Christ.

Another aspect of this intuition is that a model of ministry that is all tied up in pastoring through education is also all tied up with the reason we go to church. The intuition further told me that we go to church to participate in the ritual and liturgy of our faith. There is a story that goes something like this. The anthropologists studied the Native North Americans and watched them dance. One of the dances that the anthropologists watched was the rain dance. They concluded that the Native North Americans danced to bring the rain. Although the dance seemed to bring rain, it was not done just to bring rain. The Native North Americans danced because dancing was how they stayed in tune with their spirit world. Dancing is the Native North Americans' way of participating in and their way of handing on their religious beliefs. Dancing is the Native North Americans primary form of liturgical expression.

My thesis is that Christian religious education is a significant model for doing pastoral ministry and that this model of ministry is an important way for producing good ethical standards. The thread that pulls education and pastoring together is the central importance of story. Further, by making story central to the ministering model brings the Christian liturgy and rituals into a new and central light. Our rituals are some of the most important

places where we enact and reenact the story bringing it, with its promise and hope, into the present so that it might shape our lives. John Westerhoff calls the church "a story formed community".<sup>2</sup> We are the people of the story that is in the Bible, being shaped in ethical ways by that story. Westerhoff goes on to say,

Baptism is our adoption into a story, God's recreative story, which is recorded in the community's story book (the Holy Scriptures), incarnate in the community's life, and made present through its sacramental rituals, especially the Holy Eucharist.<sup>3</sup> [The underlining is mine.]

Our rituals are where we encounter and participate in the shaping story that is found in the Bible. The Sunday liturgy is one of our most important rituals and for many it may be the only place and for most it is the most frequent place for this encounter to take place.

Being shaped by the story is something that affects just about every aspect of life. Because it shapes the most intimate aspects of our lives I believe that this model of ministry can and maybe should become a way of life. Christian religious education as a model of pastoral ministry is a lifestyle.

Being a lifestyle shaped by the story makes it a lifestyle of God's Kingdom. The Bible is the story of God's presence on earth. Being shaped by the story of God's work

---

<sup>2</sup>John H. Westerhoff, A Pilgrim People (New York: Seabury Press, 1984) p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

on earth makes us people of God. Jesus' coming was the beginning of the Kingdom of God. Letting ourselves be shaped by the story of Jesus' coming, by believing and living that belief, is living within that partially realized Kingdom started by our Savior so long ago.

The story that shapes us is more than the Biblical story. Each individual person is a story in the unfolding. Each individual story is being shaped by all the stories that are unfolding all around it while it participates in the shaping of those stories. To a great extent we human beings are self-determining beings. It is this self-determining nature that allows us to select which stories have more effect and which have less effect. Thus, becoming people shaped by the Biblical story is both something that we are enveloped in without realizing it as young members of a church family and something we must eventually select as a guiding, shaping influence, in our lives. Helping the congregation to select the Biblical story as influential is one of the church's and therefore the pastor's primary tasks.

Mary Elizabeth Moore puts it like this:

The story becomes the bearer of a culture, the story of a people. The big story is the saga of God's people. This saga is a traditional history of our community, and it enters into our lives as we enter into it. In the interaction the saga has power to shape our being and our future. Likewise the saga is shaped by us as we hear it, and live it. It is a growing story.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Mary Elizabeth Moore, Education for Continuity and Change (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983) p. 14.

This is the process where the past comes into the present and pushes us into a future of new meaning. Our context, the environment and world situation in which we live tell us of a tremendous need for change and our tradition or story gives us the foundation upon which we build into our changing future. It is more than simply a foundation. Our story and tradition give us the vitality with which we grow into that new future.

We can not just cut off our past and start over. To do so would be similar to cutting off the roots of a tree and expecting the rest to continue to grow. Our story is that which feeds us. The strong roots of our Christian tradition enable us to produce healthy growth.

Stanley Hauerwas has a similar but fundamentally different point to make in his various discussions of Christian ethics. Instead of arguing that the story is the basis of Christian religious education, he argues very convincingly that the story is that which provides us with our moral sense. According to Hauerwas' thesis there is no ethical sense outside the narrative and our primary narrative is the Bible. When talking about the task of the church he says,

Any community and polity is known and should be judged by the kind of people it develops...Freedom comes only by participation in a truthful polity...The most important social task of Christians is to be nothing less than a community capable of forming people with virtues sufficient to witness to God's truth in the world...It is not the task of the church to try to

develop social theories or strategies to make America work; Rather the task of the church is to become a polity that has the character necessary to survive as a truthful society.<sup>5</sup>

The word polity is from the word politics which is how we, as a community, are now and how we are changing for a better future. Although Hauerwas stresses reason and Moore does not and Hauerwas does not stress the future as Moore does, their theories are surprisingly similar. Together they provide the insight that caused my intuition to become a thesis.

There is a fundamental connection between Christian religious education and ethics. Moore's and Hauerwas' theories say that Christian religious education is the means that can provide a people with the ability to be a "truthful society", or provide the necessary moral foundation to be the people of God. Ritual and liturgy is one of the primary places that this kind of education takes place.

Up until recently I had the misconception that the job of Christian religious education was to teach people about Jesus and God and to do this was to help them along the road to salvation. Salvation is most often related to life after death and to Jesus' promise of his father's many roomed mansion where there is a place being prepared for us. This idea of salvation has little to do with the lives we

---

<sup>5</sup>Stanley Hauerwas, A Community of Character (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981) p.3.

live in this world. Salvation, in the fullest sense of its meaning, is a changed life. Thinking in terms of story and ethical living for a better future also means a changed life. Thought of in these terms salvation becomes a term for this world, for the whole world, today. There are many different definitions of salvation and this is not the place to discuss that definition. The main thing that is important is that there is another reason for doing Christian religious education.

Jesus' teaching has a very lifestyle oriented message. Much of his teaching is a "go and do likewise" message. In light of this aspect of Jesus' story I believe that a better ethical style of living is one existential outcome of Christian education. These theories seem to point in this direction also. My intuition was that there was a tie between Christian religious education and ethics. My hunch further told me that tying them would result in a good model for doing pastoral ministry, a model that emphasized worship as a primary mode of story participation.

The problem is that the connections between these ideas is not clear. With only a brief sketch this model of ministry could be misinterpreted as something similar to the early twentieth century Social Gospel. Another aspect of the problem is that Christian religious education has always been seen as a part of pastoral ministry but it has not often been considered a model for pastoral ministry. A

third and final aspect of the problem is that the idea of story or narrative or of traditioning is relatively obscure. Although many utilize it as a part of education and we regularly participate in it in our liturgies and rituals, few have named it and examined its potential.

Moore explores the tension between continuity and change as one of the basic problems facing educators. I think that her analysis is excellent. In light of that I am not going to attempt to duplicate her work. That tension is there and it has plagued education for a long time. I think that my work here is going on from where she left off. I, like her, think that both continuity and change are essential for healthy existence.

My task here is to identify Moore's traditioning model of Christian religious education and tie it to Hauerwas' theory of ethical development, both of which are based on the story that shapes our lives. Since Hauerwas and Moore base their theories on the importance of story and worship is where we most regularly are exposed to and participate in the Biblical story, I am also going to look at what it means to let story shape our Sunday liturgy.

The first section will be my understanding of Moore's traditioning model of Christian religious education. The second will be my understanding of Hauerwas' theory of ethical development and how that is tied to Moore's traditioning model of ministry. The third part is a look at



this models implications for one very story oriented aspect of church life, our Sunday liturgy. Westerhoff sums it up this way.

Stories are of central importance in human life, and they are enacted through our rituals. We humans can not live without rituals; our religious life is expressed collectively through symbolic narrative (sacred stories) and symbolic actions (rituals and ceremonies)...It is the eternal cycle of the church year with its re-presentation of God's story in interaction with our human story that best orders our lives within a Christian faith community. One of the fundamental aims of liturgy is to help us to relive God's story in such a way that it touches, illumines, and transforms our human story and thereby shapes our lives to serve God's purposes for personal and communal life.<sup>6</sup>

Underlying this entire endeavor is the need for the pastor to be involved in the educational task. Richard Baxter calls to us from the past:

When the Lord awakened His ministers...to a sense of their duty in the work of catechizing and private instruction of all their parishes...they judged it unmeet to enter upon the work without a solemn humbling of their souls before the Lord, for their long neglect of so great and necessary a duty;...<sup>7</sup>

Early in reformation history the Church worked side by side with civil government. Church law was every bit as powerful as civil law and the Church was actively engaged in teaching. Early in our North American history the Church and the family were the primary providers of moral formation. The Church started the educational revolution

---

<sup>6</sup>Westerhoff, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor (London: SCM Press, 1956) p. 13.

but has slowly relinquished its place as primary provider of moral formation. After it spawned the rapid moving Sunday School movement and a vast University system, the Church moved out of the field of secular teaching. During the middle of this century, in the confusion of National Civil Religion with Christianity, the Church turned its teaching authority over to the secular world.

The Church allowed the public school system to become the primary moral teacher. During our recent past the public school system's teaching authority has been challenged. The people of the United States have lost faith in the system's ability to do the job of moral formation. Viet Nam, Watergate, and many other lesser government fiascoes have caused many people to question the government's teaching authority.

During the last couple of decades neither the Church (outside the Catholic Church's Papal guidance) or the public school system have made any significant attempt to provide people with any moral formation. Baxter expresses much of the same concern that I feel. The Church has the tradition that makes it our natural moral educator. Somehow the Church needs to reestablish itself as the provider of foundations for moral living. Baxter advocated pastors educating, "catechizing", personally instructing their congregations. This is the model of ministry where Christian religious education and pastoring become engulfed

one with the other. Baxter's call for today is an imperative. It must be heeded by some if not all pastors to some extent. This is a needed model of ministry that can inform all pastoral ministries and become the primary or foundational model for some.

For many education is something that is done at school or in a specifically educational setting. This model of ministry is a lifestyle. By that I mean education is more than a full time process. We are bombarded by a fairly efficient mass media. It teaches us and our families many things that we would rather not know. I am not talking about consciousness raising or world affairs issues. Rather, I am talking about the kind of learning that takes place in advertising, convincing us that we need products that we not only do not need but that promote standards of living that may be unacceptable to us. This kind of teaching also takes place in many of the shows that we watch day in and day out. Much of what we learn is learned unconsciously from the examples we see in the media.

An old adage is that actions speak louder than words. Another is that one must practice what one preaches. These two adages are true, especially when one is preaching and teaching. To really allow the story to shape ones life it must have some visible affect. One aspect of the role of pastor in this model of ministry is to model a story shaped life, a life in which the stories effect is evident.

Someone somewhere in my past once told me that everything you do says something about who you are, what you believe, and what you hold to be valuable. This is especially true for the one entrusted with bringing the "true" story into the present and making it a part of the peoples experience. The true story's presence in the entrusted one's life must be evident.

The Church has traditionally provided moral formation for secular society. As the visible leader and authority figure in the local church the pastor has the responsibility to be very involved in the education of his or her congregation all the time. From small seemingly insignificant personal moral decisions to world wide social concerns, moral action must be rooted in our Christian faith, our "true" story that shapes our character and defines our actions.

Christian religious education is a process of bringing our religious heritage or tradition into the present in a way that helps it to become a part of our present experience, that it may become a part of our story in our working toward a better future. This process is what Hauerwas calls character development. The reason for bringing the story into the present that it might shape our characters is to provide us with the ethical foundation for living. Westerhoff tells us that our rituals are where the bringing forward of the story happens most significantly and

most often. My task here is to attempt to show how this all comes together.

Time and space will not allow me to argue the contention that all pastoral functions can be informed by and based upon this type of Christian religious education as a model for pastoral ministry. Many pastors have made other models of ministry foundational to their pastoral ministry. What I am proposing here is not to replace any other model. Christian religious education as a model for pastoral ministry is simply an alternative striving toward the same end. Just as much of pastoral ministry is informed by pastoral counseling, even where pastoral counseling is not the foundational model, I hope that most pastoral ministry can become more informed by Christian religious education, even where it is not the foundational model.

## Chapter II

### CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: A Traditioning Model

#### Story and Education

In discussing Christian religious education there are many terms that need to be defined. My primary concern here is to describe Moore's traditioning model of Christian religious education. In light of this goal I am only briefly going to define why I feel the need to call it Christian religious education and not simply Christian education or religious education. Christianity is the story that brought me into a close relationship with God. I have also encountered several people who have had very visible, close relationships with God who do not call themselves Christians. They have been shaped by different stories and have come out of different religious traditions. I have a real problem claiming that the story and religious tradition that have shaped me have any exclusive grasp on absolute truth. I feel that somehow we are all struggling with the same thing. This model of ministry is about being shaped by a true story and Christianity is one such story. But it is not the only true story.

John Cobb defined Christianity as all those who call themselves Christian and that Christianity was not a word

that described the quality of that person. If one were to redefine Christianity as the people who are shaped by the Christian story and who lived that shaping authentically, then there might be some validity to using Christianity as a word of qualitative description. If Hauerwas is right in his claim that a polity should be judged by the kind of community that it develops, then again, Christianity might be this kind of word. But that is not the case. For one reason or another Christianity can not be used as a word of qualitative description. For now Christianity is simply a word that many use to describe their religious world view.

Moore says it well.

Using the term Christian religious education communicates that the search for a new model is one that is taking place within the Christian faith community and, at the same time, one that is shared in many ways by religious educators in other faith communities.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter is my understanding of Moore's traditioning model of Christian religious education. I agree with most of what she has written. In the few places that I do not I have commented. The model appears to have grown out of observation of what has happened in the past and what continues to happen now in the present. Much of what has gone before in Christian religious education has taken sides in the progressive versus neo-orthodox debate. One side emphasizes change or progress and the other

---

<sup>1</sup>Mary Elizabeth Moore, Education for Continuity and Change (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983) p. 9.

emphasizes the basic need for continuity, hence its name, neo-orthodox. Moore is working to bring these two sides together in a healthy tension that produces good change out of the tradition. Both are fundamentally important and neither can be emphasized over the other for more than a short time. "The assumption underlying this model is that a theory of Christian religious education should explain and stimulate both continuity and change."<sup>2</sup> There is a real challenge in this model to overcome dualistic thinking and to bring together two ideas to make them all a part of a larger whole.

The model Moore presents has two basic tasks, hermeneutics and transformation. There is no way to separate them, "They are interrelated, and each is dependent upon the other."<sup>3</sup> She explains,

Hermeneutics is the opening up of persons to their past traditions, present experiences, and future expectations and hopes...Education maximizes continuity and change when it facilitates the hermeneutic task.<sup>4</sup>

This is the part of the model that has more to do with continuity but even here the aspect of change is present.

The other task is transformation. Transformation is, "a changing of persons and culture, a conversion...a reforming of persons, of societies, and of the historical tradition itself."<sup>5</sup> This is the part of the model that

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



most directly is related to change but here again it must be noted that this change only comes out of the continuity.

Moore stresses the interrelatedness of this kind of growth. She explains the newness of her claim saying,

The radical claim here is that the community must recognize how deeply connected it is through time and across the globe...Change is a transformation, conversion, or reversal that breaks into the connectedness some way...[another] radical claim is that change is so much apart of the world that neither persons nor the church as a whole are ever static.<sup>6</sup>

Moore's model echos Baxter's call to do the neglected task. This model challenges the congregation to be the people of the story that is our continuity, living authentically out of that continuity today, moving into a better future.

Many have struggled with the tension between continuity and change. Paul Irwin defined Christian education saying,

Christian education is the guided growth experience or developmental process whereby the individual becomes increasingly aware and responsive to the working of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the Christian community (Koinonia) and manifests, within the limits of his [or her] maturity at given stages of growing up, a life of responsibly articulated freedom and creativity...This process is not confined to the happenings within a room of a building on Sunday morning or evening. The spirit listeth where it will;..."<sup>7</sup>

Irwin was clearly on the progressive side in the progressive /neo-orthodoxy debate when he wrote this

---

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>7</sup>Paul B. Irwin, "Definition of Christian Education" (an unpublished class handout, 1961)

definition. In this definition there is a strong emphasis upon scientific method and creating change. But even as he developed it he felt the need to stress that progressive change was something that happened within the Christian faith community. Irwin knew that continuity was necessary for good and creative change. The problem continued to plague him and later Irwin found the need to stress starting with the Bible. Irwin tried to bring continuity and change together by being a progressive educator using the sciences as they applied to religious education but rooted his work in Biblical and theological study. Moore takes this knowledge a step further and has developed the traditioning model.

Thomas Groome comes close to Moore when he defines education as "An activity of 'leading out'".<sup>8</sup> He writes,

Three dimension or points of emphasis can be discerned in "leading out": 1) a point from which, 2) a present process, and 3) a future toward which the leading out is done. In this sense, education has an "already", a "being realized", and a "not yet" dimension to it.<sup>9</sup>

Groome is also attempting to bring together continuity and change. Our story is the "point from which", our present existence is the "present process", and the better future is the "future toward which the leading out is

---

<sup>8</sup>Thomas H. Groome, Christian Religious Education (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980) p. 5.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

done". This part of Groome's theory is nearly parallel to Moore's. He also goes on to say that the story is very important. He writes,

The term Story is intended as a metaphor for all such expressions of our faith tradition as they are all part of our Christian story. From that Story, by God's grace, we draw our life of Christian faith, and by making it accessible again, we experience God's saving deeds on our behalf.<sup>10</sup>

Groome describes his model of Christian religious education as,

A group of Christians sharing in dialogue their critical reflection on present action in light of the Christian Story and its Vision toward the end of lived Christian faith.<sup>11</sup>

Groome's model has many of the same essentials that Moore's does but his is a narrower definition. Education can and often does take other forms than group dialogue. This is especially true for the pastor. Facilitating the kind of group dialogue that Groome is advocating is but one small part of the larger educational task of the pastor. Moore's traditioning model provides a far more flexible model that fits the pastoral task better.

The word traditioning comes from the word tradition which Moore defines as "a handing over, or passing down, of the good news."<sup>12</sup> This is the story that is primary in the shaping of Christian people. When we worship we are

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>12</sup>Moore, p. 23.

participating in our traditional story, reenacting it, bringing the story alive. As will be discussed in the next chapter this is the story that shapes our character that we might live authentically within the partially realized Kingdom of God.

### The Model

Moore describes her model of ministry saying,

Traditioning is a process by which God's gifts are received and passed on, not as a static box of things, but as dynamic life-changing events. Because God has acted in the past, many of these gifts are passed on through the historical traditions. Because God acts in the present, many of these gifts are discovered in the contemporary encounter. Because God will act in the future, many of these gifts will be experienced as promise. A traditioning model of education, then, is one in which persons are formed and transformed as they receive the historical traditions and as they encounter God and the world in the present and in future possibilities.<sup>13</sup>

To really get down to the central idea of the traditioning model is to get to where the hermeneutical task and the transformational task come together. Coming together is not a one time or place kind of thing. It happens all the time.

Hermeneutics is doing interpretation of the text, tradition, and the present situation and that in itself is transformational. Interpreting the stories that have brought us to where we are and interpreting our present

---

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

situation, gives us new information that we did not have prior to doing the interpretation. This insight may simply be something very minor but often it is many of these minor bits of insight, one added to another, that accumulate to bring us a whole new perspective.

Thinking in these terms does not mean simply talking of the past, present, and future of an individual or even a single community. One must talk of the past, the present, and the future of all that goes into making him or her who he or she is. All the different aspects of life, from very personal thoughts to the histories of nations and the world go into the making of an individual and into the happening of individual events. Moore says that the traditioning model has for its content the experience of the Christian community and to say this "is to recognize the unity of tradition and experience."<sup>14</sup> All three aspects of time are important to the traditioning model. People are shaped by the whole continuum of time and none it can be left out.

The hermeneutical task and the transformative task are what Moore describes as the function of education. The task is the "telling and pondering on the story and transforming it".<sup>15</sup> The task is a cyclical process that has no first or primary function. One leads into the other and back again much the same way the hermeneutical circle

---

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

does. Life is in process, never stopping, never truly stagnating. As life often goes through cycles, none of which are exactly like the one before, the hermeneutical task moves to the transformative and then on again to the hermeneutical. A spiral may be a better way to describe the cyclical processes.

Transmission is an important part of doing the traditioning model of ministry. Transmission is communicating, the telling of the story and the transmission of culture. All different kinds of methods are used to do this. The transmission can take place through teaching methods, art, liturgy and music. There is very little that we do that does not have something to do with the transmission of culture. As the church participates in the different life transition ceremonies, as the congregation year after year works through the liturgical calendar, and as the people do things that are completely outside the church, such as going to wrestling matches, ball games and movies, they are transmitting the culture. All of these things are a parts of our culture and to participate in them is to make them more important, to make them a part of our story and to ensure their remaining a part of the culture for those who come after.

Moore goes on to say,

The richer our story background, the greater are our resources for interpreting our immediate experience. Story means not only the Biblical story but also the church's historical story and the story emerging in the

church and in our globe today...Education, then, is the communication of a wealth of experiences: experiences that are historical contemporary, experiences of self and of others, experiences of passionate involvement and of action, experiences of struggling together with theological concepts and life issues. The transmission of these forms the reservoir from which the community draws.<sup>16</sup>

The traditioning model, then, is the telling, the sharing, and the participation in all of the different levels of the stories that make up our lives. This is especially true of the stories that make up that which we call our religious lives. These stories provide the ethical shaping, character building material that give us our ethical foundation.

The other and equally important part of the model is reflection. There is a real need to to get back away from the transmission, to let the story soak in, and to check and see what it says to our life and what our life has to say to it. This is something akin to the praxis reflection cycle that Groome relates. This is the the thing that allows us to bring the continuity and change together. Moore calls it the "bridge" that spans the "split of present [experience] from past [tradition] and future [promise]..."<sup>17</sup> It is in reflection that the three aspect of time come together and begin to shape lives.

But if religion is only transmission and reflection,

---

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

without having any marked effect upon those who participate, what is the reason for participating in it? Actually Moore says that some transformation is inevitable. Transformation and reflection are so much a part of life that we are effected by them whether they have any significant impact or not.

Beyond this insignificant impact there is a transformative function to this model. The transformational function is not simply faith in the progress of humanity that is present in earlier progressive educational theories. In this model the thing that is transformative is the presence of God pulling us to the best possible future. God's presence is what makes Christian religious education more than simply a human exercise. We are more than simply all that has gone before being regrouped here in the present. God takes us beyond that to realize the unrealized, to bring about that which is completely new. God is drawing us toward the Kingdom of God that is in the process of becoming.

Transformation is concerned with How? How is the community to act in the direction of the Kingdom of God--to be open to God's promise and to reconstruct its actions, beliefs, and values in light of its past, its present and its hope? Transformation is initiated by God's action, but we are called to respond to God's gift and God's pull. We are called to impact the world where we are.<sup>18</sup>

The ethical implications of this seem fairly

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 131.



obvious. We are called to impact the world. This is the call to reflect the stories that shape and make us who we are. We are called to live as if the Kingdom of God were fully realized as best we understand that call. Through our shaping stories, God calls us to reflect on our life and on the story and to let the process move us from where we are on to something new and yet unrealized. God's call is not only a challenge to reflect upon our stories and on how we are living out those stories, we are also challenged to live the standards that this kind of investigation helps us to discover. Allowing this process to work is going on to let God's pull take us to the unrealized.

Moore identifies several goals as she describes her model. The first is knowledge with understanding and directly related to that is transformation. Again these two are tied in a way that one leads into the other. Knowledge with understanding leads to transformation and that leads to new knowledge. Moore later adds that the more a community knows and understands its past the greater the reservoir of options from which it draws in its present dealings with its transformation.<sup>19</sup> The more we know and understand about our worship, the more fully we can participate in the transformation that should take place in it.

Knowledge with understanding and transformation also

---

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

provide the model with a way to evaluate the model.

The evaluation would be two fold: What knowledge of events and ideas has been learned, and what new insights do persons have into the meaning of these events and ideas? What changes are emerging in belief, action, and values? In order to assess the impact of education in the traditioning model, these two questions suggest the kinds of evaluation queries that might be most revealing.<sup>20</sup>

This kind of evaluation would be very valuable for the pastoring minister. Careful examination led by this kind of questioning could be a valuable tool for knowing how best to serve her or his congregation. An evaluative tool of this kind could also help the congregation to evaluate their pastor. The evaluation could help both the pastor and the congregation develop worship where the congregation most effectively participates in the bringing forward of the story and tradition. As worship becomes the present participation in the Biblical and liturgical story, the enactment that brings the past into the present making it a part of our present experience, an evaluative tool of this nature would make the transition easier and more effective.

Moore names six claims for her model, several of which are important to mention. As would be expected most are directly related to all that has been discussed thus far. The first claim is that education,

functions in the community to transmit tradition..., to enable people to interpret the meaning of their own experience, and to open the possibility of transforming

---

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

the individuals, the faith community, and the world.<sup>21</sup>

Christian religious education is most often assumed in a faith community and by many it is assumed that the Sunday School has primary responsibility. This model of Christian religious education explains the function of education in a way that explodes these assumptions. It can be interpreted in a way that can give the pastor a great deal of responsibility in the doing of Christian religious education. Hauerwas says that the church's primary responsibility is to be the historical church, the polity formed by the Biblical story. This puts the responsibility for ongoing Christian religious education on the congregation, at least if and when this model has taken hold. If the church's responsibility is to be the place for this kind of thing to happen, the administrative and spiritual leader of that community must guide and enable the church in the doing of its task. Here again, Baxter's call from the past can be heard. Pastors must take up the long neglected task and take responsibility for their congregations' education.

Moore's second claim is that this model education can be done in such a way that continuity can be maximized along with enabling maximum change. This idea is foundational to Moore's entire model of education. Neither

---

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

continuity or change can be ignored or eliminated and both need to be maximized. Both are fundamental parts of who we are and what we are about.

The third claim directly relates to ethical living. It is,

that the traditioning task is most fully engaged when the elements of past, present, and future are brought into continually new decisions.<sup>22</sup>

Here again Moore's emphasis is on the impact of past and future on the present. But the fact is that in doing what is being advocated here one is forced to live continually facing new decisions about life. This is the process in which ethical foundations are most important. Although there is no final way to teach one the art of decision making, as one can be taught welding or auto-mechanics, decision making is where the stories and promises or hopes that have become our life come into play most significantly.

Another important claim is that this model of education is both personal and interactive. Traditioning is not simply the personal faith growth of an individual just as it is not simply the community together. This model of Christian religious education is both, together.

There is only one of Moore's claims that I have some struggle with. Moore says that because of the kind of model

---

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

that it is the traditioning model "can be significantly informed by developmental theory."<sup>23</sup> The struggle stems from two concerns. One is that developmental theory does not coincide with many persons' life experience. Another reason for questioning developmental theory stems from the fact that it is fairly restricted to one group of people in one society. Although Moore was not attempting to develop an universal model of Christian religious education, there are many who share a type of faith development experience that does not fit within an ages and stages approach to faith development.<sup>24</sup> There is no need to completely discount the theory because it does help some in curriculum development but I would not advocate its widespread use.

The second concern stems from witnessing the abuse of developmental theory. Some educators have been so influenced by the ages and stages approach that it has caused them to structure church programming in such a way that there is very little intergenerational activity. Peoples life stages often do not fit their chronological age and would be better served in a group other than their own age group. The theory does not advocate this kind of structure but following developmental theory has lead to age compartmentalized church structure. As was noted this is an

---

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>24</sup>I understand that other educational theorists share my misgiving in developmental theory such as Campbell Wycoff, but I have not as yet been able to document this.

abuse of the theory but it can lead to a church where there is no interaction between age groups and where some people are forced to participate in groups that do not meet their needs. Through very careful and thoughtful preparation developmental theory might have some limited use in the church; again it must be stressed that it needs to be thoughtful and careful, limited use.

Moore's final claim is that the traditioning model of Christian religious education is inherently dialogical. Transformation takes place through dialogue. The cycle described earlier of hermeneutics and transformation is in itself a form of dialogue. This is "opening up dialogue between persons, between cultural groups, within persons, and so forth."<sup>25</sup> It is in and through the happening of dialogue that both interpretation or hermeneutics and transformation take place. Interpretation is, in a sense, dialogue between the person or persons doing the interpretation and that which is being interpreted.

Moore goes on to point out some characteristics of the model. Two that she puts together as hopeful outcomes are curiosity and creativity. "Hopefully persons will be inspired to both seek and invent."<sup>26</sup> Good education or education well done has these two as essential ingredients. Most educators who are successful have incorporated both

---

<sup>25</sup>Moore, p. 140.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

curiosity and creativity into the teaching method. But it must be noted that simply using a method does not insure that curiosity and creativity will automatically be there. A creative and captivating educator can stimulate both curiosity and creativity using any one of many different models of education.

This entire model of ministry is a challenge to take education, especially Christian religious education, seriously. We are people who are shaped significantly by our past and the promises that create hope for the future. Christian religious education is the work of helping to make sense out of all of that here in the present. Using this model a pastor could have a distinctive and significant impact upon a congregation and upon him or herself.

What is being called for is a traditioning process that opens up the worlds of past, present, and future and evokes inspiration and courage to enter fully into a living tradition. To enter into that tradition, one bears responsibility for taking seriously the historical tradition and future hope. Further, one risks being transformed and being called to transform the world.<sup>27</sup>

This is the traditioning model of Christian religious education. The transformation that is being called for comes out of our tradition from very early times. Amos called to the people of God of his day. The reformers called not only to the people but to the clergy. Baxter called primarily to the pastors of his time but all were

---

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

calling for a transformation. The transformation that calls to us is the call to assist in the transformation of the world. The call has become an imperative for today's religious leaders.



### Chapter III

#### ETHICAL LIVING: A Look From the Story Perspective

##### Why Story

Christian religious education, ethics, pastoring, and the liturgy are four focuses of Christian thinking that are often connected tangentially but are seldom linked as in a model for ministry. There is evidence that these four topics are more than tangentially related and may even be fundamentally linked in a way that makes Christian religious education a basic model of ministry for pastoring that brings our tradition and history into the present through our liturgies and rituals in a way that provides people with a good foundation for ethical living. For our religion to provide its people with a foundation for ethical living the most common of all our religious activities must be involved. One of the most important and most often participated in ways for Christians to be involved in their tradition and history is through worship.

The one idea that pulled these four topics together was the idea of story. The insight has come from studying the history of Christian religious education and exploring the idea of oral history. Take Paul Irwin for example. Many students today have never had Irwin as an instructor

and most have probably not read any of his work, for he has published very little. By studying Irwin's oral history and looking at his impact upon Christian religious education one soon becomes aware that Irwin's impact is fairly far reaching. Part of the reason that many of today's Christian educators use the educational style that they do is directly related to Irwin's influence. This is even true in cases where the educators do not know of Irwin or of his influence upon Christian religious education. He has become an important part of Christian religious education's story.

A part of becoming a Christian religious educator now means that there is a need to study Irwin and let his story again become present. Doing this does not mean that we take Irwin and make him the giver of truth and somehow idealize his teachings. What it does mean is that we need to look at his story and see how that story is our story. We need to see Irwin's struggles and let them shape how we go on being the story. As Hauerwas says, we need to let Irwin's story train us "in how to see".<sup>1</sup> As Christians we are the people of God. The Bible is the story of God's activity on earth and we are the people of that book. Along with being the people of the Biblical story we are also the people of the story that the Church has been forming ever since the time of Christ. We are formed by all the stories

---

<sup>1</sup>Stanley Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue (Notre Dame: Fides/Claration Press, 1974) p. 20.

that converge to make up our personal stories but the stories that are of primary interest here are those that shape and form our ethical living standards.

In terms of ethical living it is the Biblical story that is important. Hauerwas' theory of ethical development can help to make the Bible an important book for all Christians in today's world. Instead of being the rule book from the past that is either idealized or discarded in the present, the Bible becomes the story book that helps us to know how God would have us live. Hauerwas calls this process "learning to see" and describes it as character development. Just as Irwin's story has and continues to shape the development of Christian religious education, the Bible has and will continue to shape peoples ethical living standards.

Moore has provided much of the "how to" of Christian religious education. Her model makes story fundamentally important and in doing that she explains some of why story is so important. Hauerwas, using much the same kind of reasoning makes the story the basis for ethical living. Instead of focusing on the "how to" of story related Christian religious education, Hauerwas focuses on the "why". To bring the story into the present in a way that makes it a part of present experience is to develop the character through the truth in the story. Developing the character is providing the people with narrative shaped

living standards. It only seems logical that Christian religious education should effect the way a person lives. As an ethicist at the University of Notre Dame Hauerwas has developed the thesis that good ethical living grows out of the narrative story available in our Bible and tradition.

Hauerwas writes that,

The Christian life is not simply a matter of assuming a vague loving attitude, but rather it is a concrete determination of our being developed through our history."<sup>2</sup>

By hearing the story and experiencing that story, by making the Biblical story our story, our characters are shaped and we develop an ethical sense. Hauerwas thesis rests on character formation as one of the most important tasks of the church. The church is not only the "story formed community", but the community that forms the story. In making story an important part of the life of a church it also becomes significant to the pastor and makes corporate worship the central act of Christian faith. Insuring that the story is brought into the present in such a way that the people can make it a part of their story through worship may be the single most important task of the pastor.

Most of what Hauerwas says makes a great deal of sense. His theory is clear but there are some places where I do not completely agree. So, although I have followed much of Hauerwas' theory, I have also developed my own,

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

using Hauerwas and others. This chapter is my theory of ethics and its ties with Mary Elizabeth Moore's theory of Christian religious education.

### The Story Perspective

To understand Hauerwas one needs to have some understanding of the way the people have traditionally done ethics in the Western World. Hauerwas calls our traditional ways "the standard account".<sup>3</sup> Just as science has attempted to step outside the personal realm and do completely unbiased rational research so the standard account has "tried to show that moral judgments, insofar as they can be considered true, must be the result of impersonal rationality."<sup>4</sup> The standard account is based on problem solving and moral decision making. Hauerwas theorises that to make decision making central is fundamentally wrong. We are "still tempted, in Kantian fashion, to reduce morality to a single formula."<sup>5</sup> The major mistake in doing this is,

the assumption that the idea of decision is the central ethical concept... Those that assume this model of moral experience tend to think of the world primarily as made up of hard facts that are easily recognizable by reason... [But]... We do not come to know the world by

---

<sup>3</sup>Stanley Hauerwas, Truthfulness and Tragedy (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977) p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue , p. 35.

perceiving it,... we come to know the world as we learn to use our language... It is only as our notions are needed in a way of life that they acquire meaning... The moral life is therefore not just the life of decision but the life of vision- that is , it involves how we see the world... The moral life is a struggle and training in how to see.<sup>6</sup>

Only as we begin to develop our own stories, to live them and express them, do we begin to have a sense of ethics. Our ethical sense develops as we take the true stories that surround us and make them part of our own story. The way we perceive the world has an awful lot to do with our ideas about what is right and what is wrong and the stories that make up our story shape the way we perceive the world.

Hauerwas goes on to say,

Ethics cannot be reduced to the study of rational argument...The moral life is more than thinking clearly and making rational choices. It is a way of seeing the world."<sup>7</sup>

As was mentioned above the standard account uses decision making as its foundation. Thinking in terms of story and in terms of Hauerwas' theory changes that all around. Instead of being the basis for ethics, decision making is simply one of the things that force us to express our ethical foundations. Decision making is where our ethical living standards most often come to light.

Hauerwas holds the belief that our traditional ways of ethical living are ignoring the narrative aspect of life.

---

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. pp. 13-20

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 36

Stressing the narrative aspect changes the way we hold Biblical and ecclesiastical authority. The truth that guides life is in the story rather than in rules or dogma. Although there is something to be said for allowing our actions to shape our lives, stressing the narrative aspect of our tradition creates a situation where the story questions our life rather than having life question the story. Instead of looking for the answers to life's hard questions written somewhere in the scripture, the scripture asks us to reflect on life in light of the story. In the process the answers to life's hard questions become more clear.

Hauerwas stresses that we need to recover "the narrative dimension of christology".<sup>8</sup> In doing so,

We will be able to see that Jesus did not have a social ethic, but that his story is a social ethic. For the social and political validity of a community results from its being formed by a truthful story, a story that gives us the means to live without fear of one another. Therefore there can be no separation of christology from ecclesiology, that is Jesus from the church. The truthfulness of Jesus creates and is known by the kind of community his story should form.<sup>9</sup>

The ramifications of thinking in terms of being story formed are far reaching both in how we approach the Bible and in how we pass on our faith. Christian religious education takes on a whole new meaning. Hauerwas says that,

---

<sup>8</sup>Stanley Hauerwas, A Community of Character (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981) p. 37.  
<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

"To be a Christian in effect is learning to see the world in a certain way and thus become what we see."<sup>10</sup> What we see in New Testament Bible stories is primarily Jesus Christ and the ministry that immediately followed his life. The life shaping parts are not the rules that are laid down in various places but rather the story of Jesus Christ, God among us. Hearing the story of Jesus Christ and the stories that surrounded his ministry should challenge us to ask, What does this say to us about our life, rather than looking for rules for living. Letting the story challenge our lives is part of what Hauerwas is talking about when he says that we should attempt to "become what we see".

Although he does not come out and say it, the task of the church is to enable the congregation "to see". Learning to see becomes the very essence of Christian religious education. Our Christian story helps us "to see" the world under the mode of the divine...A Christian does not simply 'believe' certain propositions about God; [s]he learns to attend to reality through them."<sup>11</sup> Within the congregation and during our worship are the places learning to "see" takes place. Hauerwas says that the church's function is simply to be the historical church but for this to be true being the historical church must include the intentional handing on of the story. As the church has

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 46.



lived the story, a big part of the traditional task has been the handing on of the story. Handing on the story is not simply taking the parts of the tradition that feel good to this generation and passing them on. A major part of hearing the good news is hearing the judgment. Letting the story shape our lives is hearing the "bad news" and realizing that that portion of the story also applies to us. The whole story needs to shape our character, the good news as well as the bad news, the parts we are proud of as well as those that bring us shame.

"Learning to see" is the formation of the character. Character is that which, being shaped by our past, gives us the ability to shape our future. As Hauerwas says,

Character is morally significant because, if rightly formed, it provides a proper transition from our past to our future; for the task of this transition is not to accept the future unconditionally, but to respond and remake the future in the right way.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore learning to see is character development and since learning to see is the work of Christian religious education, developing the character is also the work of Christian religious education. In this sense Christian religious education is not simply the work of the Sunday School or the occasional Bible study but the work of the entire church all of the time. Hauerwas says that this conception,

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

of character implies that moral goodness is primarily a prediction of persons and not acts, and that this goodness of persons is not automatic but must be acquired and cultivated.<sup>13</sup>

In further developing his theory Hauerwas explains the fundamental importance of story. The only way to understand moral living is through story, both our personal stories and the "true" stories that we allow to shape our lives. There is no way to separate ethics from story. Our moral principles are only understandable as they are explained in story. When one makes a statement of moral principle, it may seem to be unrelated to the idea of story. But this unrelatedness is only an illusion because that statement is about the future intentions of ones life, which is in fact a story. So even bald policy statements describing moral intentions are fundamentally story related.

Hauerwas sees a tremendous amount of influence from our surrounding history. "Our character is the result of our sustained attention to the world that gives a coherence to our lives." <sup>14</sup> In this statement one can see Hauerwas' stress on ones own self-determination. He believes that this is an important part of living. One has the ability to determine one's own action. But this statement also shows his belief in our being shaped by our past. It seems that if our character is properly shaped by

---

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

the stories that make up our history that we will tend to live the kind of lives that we are suppose to live.

One thing that history and religious foundation have brought to many folks in the church is the present involvement of God in this life. God's grace is an active ongoing creational presence in life that takes living in tune with God far beyond the realm of self-determination and being shaped by ones past. God's presence and activity in this life may be in Hauerwas' work somewhere but it is not an important part of his theory.

There are many parallels between Hauerwas' theory of Christian ethics and Cobb's process theology. Process thought can help to fill out some of the theological weaknesses found in Hauerwas' theory. Hauerwas has a strong belief in self-determination and has very little to say about the possibility of something completely new, something not related to some past event, becoming realized in ones life. He does say,

Though the importance of psychological and environmental factors are not to be underestimated, men [and women] are not beings who are simply formed by the interaction of these forces.<sup>15</sup>

Hauerwas states here that humanity is not simply the coming together of all that is in their individual pasts but for Hauerwas the novelty that is present is not the presence

---

<sup>15</sup>Stanley Hauerwas, Character and Christian Life (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1975) p. 18.

of the divine. He goes on to say "Men [and women] are in essence self-determining beings." <sup>16</sup> In the coming together of past events into the present event, that which makes the present event more than simply a summation of past events is, in Hauerwas' theory, human beings ability to be self-determinative beings.

In process thought God is that which makes the present event more than simply a summation of the past. There are possibilities of a completely new kind in every present event. These are possibilities that have never been actualized in one's past.<sup>17</sup> God is the power that moves to create these new and yet unrealized good possibilities. "Relatedness to this God implies a continual creative transformation of that which is received from the past, in light of the divinely received call forward, to actualize novel possibilities." <sup>18</sup> This knowledge of God's activity in the present is what is missing in Hauerwas' theory and process theology dovetails nicely to fill in this gap.<sup>19</sup>

The other side of this is that Hauerwas has made an important point. Human beings are to a very great extent

---

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>John B. Cobb, Jr., and David Ray Griffin, Process Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976) p. 28.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>19</sup>Process thought has had a great deal of influence on Mary Elizabeth Moore's thought and this type of thinking is implicit in her thought.

self-determining beings. Acknowledging that aspect of our creation is important. God has granted us the ability to decide what it is that we are going to do. This places a great deal of responsibility on us. But it is also important to recognize God's guidance. Although we are very much a product of our past, we also can be and often are directly motivated to do things that have nothing to do with our past. Motivation of this kind is God calling us to a completely new future. God is present with us and God's presence gives us the ability to be rightly self-determining beings and to do completely unique and unforeseen things as people living in the partially realized Kingdom of God.<sup>20</sup> One significant impact of thinking about ethics in these terms is its impact on hermeneutics. Hauerwas makes a point of the fact that thinking in this way changes the questions one asks of the scripture. The standard account asks, What does the Bible tell us to do in this or this situation? The emphasis is on decision making and tends to emphasize freedom and responsibility. The decision makers beliefs and living situation are of little importance in the standard account. Emphasizing decision making leads one to attempt to discover Jesus' social ethic or the predominate social ethic defined in the Bible. Thinking in

---

<sup>20</sup>Hauerwas makes the point that Jesus' significance is in the fact that God began the Kingdom in and through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

terms of story and character development does not mean that rational decision making is rejected. What it does mean is that the questions that one takes to the text are not questions of what to do in this or that particular situation. There is still need for exegesis but the questions of ones own life happenings take on greater significance.

Professor Croatto of I.S.E.D.E.T. in Buenos Aires, Argentina<sup>21</sup> argues that eisegesis is maybe even more important than exegesis. He believes that the life situation of the reader is as important or more importance than the situation in which the Bible was written. In view of Hauerwas thesis Croatto is emphasizing the present unfolding of the life story over the traditional story that is our Biblical heritage. We are living with the problems that life has brought to us and very few can effectively escape dealing with life's problems.

Thinking in terms of the present should not be made into an absolute in any way. Croatto stressed that both eisegetical reflection and exegetical study are needed to make the task complete. Much the same way Hauerwas makes a point of the narrative aspect of ethics, Croatto makes the point of the eisegetical nature of biblical study. The point is that Biblical study, ethics and our present living

---

<sup>21</sup>From a lecture to the School of Theology at Claremont travel study seminar, at I.S.E.D.E.T., spring 1984.

situation are inextricably interconnected in Christian living.

Croatto is basically correct in that we think in terms of our living situation whether or not we want to. If something can be or is related to our life situation we have a much greater tendency to respond to it or to learn about it. We are influenced by all that goes into making us who and what we are and our living situation is the most immediate influence upon us. To try to divorce ourselves or to think that we can divorce ourselves from our living situation is to participate in the same kind of illusion that is being attempted in Hauerwas' standard account. It is far more realistic to acknowledge our living situations influence just as Hauerwas supports acknowledging our beliefs. This is a big step toward knowing that we are limited beings and that we can celebrate life even in our limited (human) state.

The hermeneutical circle and Latin American praxis/reflection have a lot in common. They give us a good approach to doing the hermeneutical task. We must read, with as much knowledge as possible, and reflect. Reflection is not just reflection on the story but on what the story means to us today. To be effective reflection should lead to action or changed action. If the Bible does not effect us in our day to day lives, if it does not touch us where we live, What use is it? The action then takes us back to the

reading and reflecting and round the cycle goes.

This process is the process through which the story shapes our character. Reflecting and acting is internalizing the story and making it our own. A process like this takes place most effectively in a community that has made the story its own. But it does not stop with personal praxis reflection. The community is involved in the process nearly constantly. Handing on the story is helping the community to make the story its own story. This involves almost everything which makes up the church, from Sunday School, to the Administrative Board, from the women's and men's organizations to the committees on mission and evangelism. Although every part of the church is involved in the process perhaps the most important part of church activity is worship. Worship is the most regular and possibly the only place that many folks in the church come into contact with the Biblical story. In worship we should participate in the story in a way that we do internalize it and make it our own story.

In the traditional account ethics has been most often defined as being able to make the best decision. Ethical living was described as a life in which most decisions were made correctly. Thinking in terms of Hauerwas' theory makes ethics something far more important. Making correct decision is important and is tied to ethics, but it is not foundational. Being shaped by a true story is



foundational. In this case it is the Biblical story, it is the story of our God and peoples perceptions of that God. The Bible is a guide for living not as a rule book but as something that can and does shape us into people of God. The Bible is not an end in itself but only a means by which we become more fully the people of God.

One thing that was mentioned briefly earlier in this chapter was one important implication of this idea of ethical formation. Hauerwas says that not only must we learn to see but we must become what we see. The Bible is not only our story, it is also the story of God among us. When we need to learn about God we go to the book that is about God's relationship with humanity.

The story that is found in the Bible has some very God oriented ideas about how to live. Justice, righteousness, love, honesty, freedom, and dependability are some of the qualities of God that we might see in the story and we need to attempt to become what we see. Also in the story is a call to serve and a call to be the manifestation of God here on earth. The idea is not simply Hauerwas'. It is implicit in the story. Jesus Christ is often held up as the ultimate example for human being to emulate. Being shaped by the story is more than using the stories of Jesus as examples for life. Being shaped by the story is finding God in the story and attempting to become what we see. As the church we are the body of Christ and Jesus Christ is God

among us. We are called to imitate God that we might truly become what the manifestation of God and all that God is, here in this life.

There are some themes that seem to be more related to being the people of God but even those are somewhat contextual and some of those are more prevalent than others. As Professor Cobb has said, there are no absolutes. Often freedom, justice and righteousness are held up as standards that God would have us live by. The only way these and all the rest of the standards work is in a careful balance and that balance is found in Gods will for us. Ethical living is finding the balance, it is living in tune with God. The whole story is important and we need to hear those parts that are most directly related to how we live. Ethical living is being true to the story that has shaped us.

## Chapter IV

### RITUAL AND LITURGY: Bringing the Story into the Present

#### Story in Ritual and Liturgy

Burton Mack tells us that there are two significant stories that are foundational to our Western culture, "the story of hero and the story of Christ."<sup>1</sup> These are the two stories that we live between and that have the greatest potential to shape our lives. The hero story shapes our lives in nearly the opposite way that our life is shaped by the story of Christ.

It is enough for us to see that in the story of Christ, the Kingdom is made available in an act of self-sacrifice; in the story of the hero it is achieved in the act of self-aggrandizement. And so the option is before us.<sup>2</sup>

So the option is before us?

Mack helps to clarify the imperative nature of the pastor's call to be a story educator. The mass media teaches the hero story on every station in nearly every program. We need to take seriously the need to bring our religious heritage and tradition into the present in ways that help our congregations to make that heritage and our

---

<sup>1</sup>Burton Mack, "Seminar: The New Testament as Our Story", Impact Number 5 (1980)

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

tradition an integral part of their lives.

Our identity is dependent on a story that tells us who we are; our understanding of life's meaning and purpose is dependent on having a story that tells us what the world is like and where we are going.<sup>3</sup>

Bringing our religious story and tradition into the present permeates the whole work of the church and should inform the pastor in nearly every task, especially in the ritual of worship.

We need to enlarge our grasp of this... story --to learn it more completely, to understand it more deeply, to possess it more personally, and to live it more fully. This is a life long task.<sup>4</sup>

The object of this chapter is to explore some of the implications that this model of ministry has for one important area of pastoring. The area of pastoral ministry that is most directly related to story is worship. Our ritual of worship is our present re-creation of our religious tradition and story. Our Christian rituals are the thing that sets us apart as Christian people.

"Christianity" is the whole complex of phenomena --religious, moral, political and aesthetic --which is the historical actuality of this tradition. Christianity is the lived-out fact of the telling and mistelling, believing and perverting, practice and malpractice, of the narrative of what is suppose to have happened and to be yet going to happen with Jesus-in-Israel, and of the promise made by that narrative.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>John H. Westerhoff, A Pilgrim People (New York: Seabury Press, 1984) p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>5</sup>Robert W. Jenson, Story and Promise (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973) p. 1.

The church is the community formed by the Biblical narrative and tradition. Our sacramental and worship rituals are our constant reenacting of the most central stories and the telling of the whole story.

Perhaps no aspect of life is more important than our ceremonial life. We humans are made for ritual, and our rituals make us... Faith and ritual cannot be separated... Without rituals, we lack a means for building and establishing purposeful identity;... We are devoid of any significant way to sustain and transmit our understandings.<sup>6</sup>

Westerhoff tends to overstate the case but he makes an important point. In our ceremonial life, in all the different rituals that mark life's transitions, we hand on our life shaping stories and traditions. The Sunday liturgy is where most people have their most frequent contact that which makes them Christian.

### Making the Story Present

Moore stresses the importance of bringing the past and the hope of the future into the present. Doing this is one of her few essentials. The past that is being brought into the present is not simply the Biblical story but the entire Christian tradition with the Bible as central. She says, "to say that this traditioning model has for its content the experience of the Christian community is to

---

<sup>6</sup>Westerhoff, p. 8.

recognize the unity of tradition and experience."<sup>7</sup> To recognize this is also to recognize that the most central Christian experience is our regular gathering for the Sunday liturgy and it is also the Christian activity most enmeshed in tradition.

Although it is the entire Christian tradition that shapes us, the central part of that tradition is the scripture. For Christianity the entire Bible is important but here again, it is the New Testament that is central to our formation. Ulrich Simon says,

The Christian narrative thus came to make the claim to being the lasting and normative revelation. God is never directly present nor ever totally absent, and it is upon [God's] unique Presence that the narrative converges. The scriptures are read to impart directly something of [God's] hidden Presence... There is a beginning and there is an end to the story, and in the middle there is change. Now the specific events which are reported and imply change... impart the Presence of God.<sup>8</sup>

In the liturgy we encounter the narrative and in the process we encounter the God that made the promises that give us hope and the God that leads us toward the best possible future. Of course the sacramental and worship rituals are not the only places that provide this encounter but they are the places that most often focuses our attention upon our narrative history.

---

<sup>7</sup>Mary Elizabeth Moore, Education for Continuity and Change (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983) p. 3.

<sup>8</sup>Ulrich Simon, Story and Faith (London: SPCK, 1975) p. 82.

Gregory Dix argues that the shape is the most important aspect of the liturgy.<sup>9</sup> His argument is that even an unformed liturgy takes on some form or shape. The very best shape that it can take is the shape handed to us by our very ancient religious heritage. This shape is very similar to the shape of the Anglican and Roman Catholic mass. Having the liturgy take this shape may indeed help to create a good worshipful community attitude but our Biblical story is far more important. The most shapely liturgy is empty without the story. If the story is not present it is not even Christian worship.

Thinking in terms of the shape of the liturgy has another implication for this model. One of Moore's goals is "knowledge with understanding".<sup>10</sup> She writes, "After all, the more a community knows and understands of its past, the more options it has to draw from in the present transformation."<sup>11</sup> For our Christian rituals to be the reenactment or the participation in the Biblical and traditional narrative, the story must be present and the people of the congregation must be helped to understand or must have their understanding enhanced. The congregation needs to be informed by and have some understanding of what is going for Christian ritual to be significant toward the

---

<sup>9</sup>Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (New York: Seabury Press, 1982)

<sup>10</sup>Moore, p. 133.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

end of personal and communal transformation.

As was mentioned in the last chapter, one of the obvious impacts of this kind of ministry is in the doing of the hermeneutical task. It changes the questions that one takes to the Bible. It may even change procedure to the point that we no longer take specific questions to the text but let the text question the way we are living the beliefs that shape our lives. Understanding hermeneutics in this way changes the way we understand the significance and authority of the Bible. Instead of proof-texting beliefs that we have already formed, we should be in dialogue with the text about life. Groome reminds us that,

To be in dialogue does not mean that the participants are to talk back and forth "at each other" constantly; such a situation might not be dialogical at all... Two essential activities are constitutive of dialogue, telling and listening.<sup>12</sup>

Listening implies a certain openness to what is being heard. If one blocks everything that is contrary to ones own beliefs, it really is not listening at all. To listen to something or someone is to be informed by what that thing or person has to say. Listening is allowing that which is being heard to become a part of ones own consciousness in a way that can make an impact. Close minded dialogue quickly becomes debate and debate is one thing that we need to avoid. What we need to learn is to

---

<sup>12</sup>Thomas H. Groome, Christian Religious Education (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980) p. 189.



listen without shutting out the truth that is present in what we read and hear but also to be discerning enough to be able to see that there is also untruth present. The thing that we need to learn to avoid is simple close mindedness.

To be in dialogue with the scriptures is not to read them with the idea that everything in the Bible is somehow literally true. To literalize the Bible is to deify the book and that is idolatrous. To be in dialogue is to be open to the truth that is present, to be open to the presence of God, to allow that story to enter into ones consciousness in a way that it becomes a part of the listeners self-hood.

Groome seems to be saying that part of dialogue is speaking. If a person or a group being exposed to ideas that do enter into their consciousness in a way that those ideas are examined, compared and contrasted, and in a way that those ideas raise questions in the hearers life, that person or group is in dialogue with those ideas. Dialogue is something that can be done in silence by a whole community. Moore seems to be saying something very similar to this when she says that the traditioning model of education is "by its nature dialogical, opening up dialogue between persons, between cultural groups, within persons, and so forth."<sup>13</sup> Dialogue is definitely something that

---

<sup>13</sup>Moore, p. 140.

goes on "within" persons.

Thinking in these terms can put preaching and all of worship in a whole new light. In preaching today there is still a tendency to "tell the people what you are going to tell them, and then tell them (preferably with three distinct points), and then tell them what you told them." The public speaking course offered at Central Washington University in 1981 was based on this idea. The professor even suggested that this style of public speaking had many uses, one of which was the preaching ministry.

Much of today's preaching education is taking a different slant. The angle that is being taken is looking from the story perspective. Clyde Fant acknowledges the importance of both the historical or the traditional and the present situation.

Preaching must recognize that it stands between the attraction of two powerful poles: to the right is 'the faith once delivered', the historical given of the eternal Word; to the left, the present situation, the existential given of our own contemporary culture.<sup>14</sup>

His writing is touching the significance of the story and takes preaching into new areas.

Richard Jenson<sup>15</sup> takes another tack and introduces the idea of the story sermon. He suggests that

---

<sup>14</sup>Clyde E. Fant, Preaching for Today (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1975) p. 28.

<sup>15</sup>Richard Jenson, Telling the Story (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980) p. 114.

the sermon can actually take the form of a story or a fairy tail. The only problem with Jenson's approach is that he suggests starting by finding the message in the Biblical passage and then creating a contemporary story around that theme. This approach can easily get bogged down in the same problems that are inherent to the "tell 'em" style.

One of the most significant aspects of the traditioning for character development model of pastoral ministry is letting the story find the message within the person who is listening. Tell the story well, and let it give its own message. There is still a need to do some interpreting and helping but enabling the congregation to hear the story is different than telling them the moral of the story. For the congregation to understand and use this kind of preaching may take some development but the goal is for the congregation to hear and think about what is being said at church and to make it a part of its own story. There may still be a place for the more traditional style of preaching but it is not the primary style for this model of pastoral ministry.

Our worship rituals are often comfortable and private affairs and maybe there is something to say for that. But the liturgy should challenge the congregation to examine life as the congregation encounters the story that shapes its life. The challenge comes through the listening and the whole process of dialogue that takes place within

and between persons as they worship together.

This kind of dialogue can be generated through the act of publicly witnessing to ones belief within the gathered congregation. We come together to publicly say that we believe, as a group, in much the same thing. We confess our belief publicly and should be challenged to think about what that means to us as individuals and as Christians who are the church, the most obvious and visible manifestation of God and Christ in the world.

God is that which is central to all of our Christian rituals. Here again, Moore's knowledge with understanding is important. Why do we do what we do? Does the congregation know why? Or is worship, the way we do it, simply the way that this pastor happens to put it together? Although traditioning for character development advocates conscious education, it does not mean that the pastor gets up and lectures or that the sermons become history lessons. What traditioning for character development does mean is that the pastor approaches the task of putting the entire ritual of worship together in a significantly different way.

The tradition is important and needs to be understood. Up to this point most of the education has focussed on the pastor assisting the congregation but there is another aspect. There are several levels of tradition. The most immediate level is personal and the second is congregational. These are the two levels where the pastor

is the one being educated. The story of the congregation and its people needs to enter the pastor's consciousness and become part of her or his story. Letting the congregation's story become part of the pastor's story is not just finding out what is going on and why and then accepting and rejecting different parts. The pastor has to be in dialogue with the congregation's story, listening with an open mind, and hearing with more than just the rational mind. To do this is to allow the congregation's story become a significant part of the pastor's story. The pastor cannot just step in and sweep aside all that does not fit into his or her idea of worship and start over. The story of each congregation is important.

Each individual's story is also important. Baxter emphasized the importance of individual ministry calling for the pastor to know each person. To know each person is to know their individual stories. For the pastor to facilitate the congregation's growth there is a real need for her or him to know these individual stories.

We are the Christian church and taking that name implies that there is special significance in the Christ story. Hauerwas points out that,

There can be no separation of christology from ecclesiology, that is Jesus from the church. The truthfulness of Jesus creates and is known by the kind of community his story should form.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup>Stanley Hauerwas, A Community of Character (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1981) p. 37.

The story of Jesus is the story that has the most significance in shaping our moral character, both personal and communal.

But it is there in the creeds... which are really narrative in form, put forth in such a way as to ask us to say yes to them. And it is there in our liturgy or order of worship. We understand it best in terms of the celebration of the Lord's supper which is placed expressly in the narrative setting of the passion accounts. But the normal sequence of scriptural readings also is based upon a narrative approach to the Bible. And the order of worship, as a whole, is really the reenactment of the story of the people of God...<sup>17</sup>

We are the people of God and our rituals and liturgies are the reenactment of our story. The most important aspect of this reenactment is the part that gives us our name, the stories of Jesus Christ.

Our Christian history tells us that one of the few things that distinguished early Christians from other worshiping religions of their day was the Christian's participation in the Lord's supper.

This 'Lord's supper', as Paul calls it, became the central, Sunday activity of Christians; the visible sign of Christ's presence in the midst of his waiting people.<sup>18</sup>

We are the people who are distinguished by this action. The Lord's supper is the remembrance and the reenactment of the single most significant action of God in the world. This

---

<sup>17</sup>Mack, p. 29.

<sup>18</sup>John H. Westerhoff, III, and William H. Willimon, Liturgy and Learning Through the Life Cycle (New York: Seabury Press, 1980) p. 31.

meal identifies us as a Christian community and brings us into table fellowship with our Lord. The Lord's supper is a witness that takes the story and makes it a part of our persons.

The Eucharist is not so much what is said as it is what is done -- a visible, active witness to the work of God in Christ in the past, present and the future.<sup>19</sup>

But it is also that which takes us and makes us a part of the story, over and over again. We participate by becoming a part of that which we are consuming. In the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the wine, we become the story and the story becomes a part of us. We are shaped by the story and we shape the story.

This model of ministry suggests that the Lord's supper is very important. For many, in some main line denominations, the Lord's supper is a good excuse for skipping Sunday services for the services are going to run over an hour. Preaching has been the central focus of Sunday worship and preaching for an half an hour is not uncommon. Although preaching is important,

the normal pattern of celebration... is a full service of Word and Table which moves from celebration and proclamation of the Word to participation in the four fold table action.<sup>20</sup>

In a story based model of ministry a focus on preaching needs some reevaluation. Telling the story is far

---

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

more important than the preachers evaluation of the story and participation in the story should become the focus of the worship service. Moving away from a preaching centered worship is a move toward worship where a full service of Word and Table become normal.

The danger is that we become uninformed and basically unshaped by boring routine. The real job of the pastor is to continue to bring the story alive to the congregation that the story might continue to shape and be shaped by the congregation. We cannot simply do what we have done in the past just because it feels good. Part of hearing the Good News is being made uncomfortable by the whole story. The whole story needs to impact the way we live. So, although the story of Jesus Christ is of central importance, the whole Biblical story needs to be brought into our stories.

What has been explored thus far is just the tip of the iceberg for story's implications on our rituals and liturgies. One thing that needs to be stressed is that there is not set way to do liturgy. Although the words 'enabling' and 'facilitating' have been a bit overworked lately, they are fair ways to describe the pastor's role. The enabling and facilitating have to do with hearing the story in a way that helps the congregation "to see' the world under the mode of the divine."<sup>21</sup> Enabling or

---

<sup>21</sup>Stanley Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue (Notre Dame: Fides/Claration, 1974) p. 46.



facilitating of this kind is character formation that gives people the ethical foundation for right living.

But as Westerhoff points out,

If any of our new Eucharistic liturgies are to be accepted, understood, and made relevant to people, we must make massive, deliberate, systematic and sustained efforts to educate children and youth and to reeducate adults.<sup>22</sup>

Westerhoff's call is also the call to do ministry in the traditioning for character development model. His call is a reflection of Baxter's much earlier call for pastors to become involved in education. What is being proposed here is not presently happening. Traditioning for character development is a model of ministry that uses all of our rituals to form and transform people for a better world. Liturgies formed by this perspective are very similar and often the same as liturgies formed by other ministerial models, yet it is also very different.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup>Westerhoff, and Willimon, p. 42

<sup>23</sup>There has been no distinction made between ritual and liturgy. Liturgy is the service of Word and Sacrament and rituals are the Christian rites of passage such as Baptism and Marriage. Usually rituals are a part of liturgy but not always.

## Chapter V

## CONCLUSION

This project has been an attempt to work out an educational model of ministry for pastoring. The model is not just any educational model but a model where the education is done from the perspective of story and the education's purpose is to creationally transform individuals, congregations and the educating pastors in a way that they all might have ethically sound foundations for living in today's world. The most important place for this pastoring education to take place is in our Sunday liturgies where we most regularly expose ourselves to and participate in our ethically shaping stories. The model of ministry proposed here is traditioning for character development throughout the church's life but most importantly through the church's rituals and liturgies.

Moore has provided much of the "how" with her traditioning model of educational ministry<sup>1</sup>. Her traditioning model is based on the stories of our faith that come to us out of the past and that tell of hope for the future and that shape our present existence. Our religious traditions give us the foundation on which we build, in the

---

<sup>1</sup>Mary Elizabeth Moore, Education for Continuity and Change (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983)

present, toward a better future. Moore's whole model is fairly well explained in the title of her book, Education for Continuity and Change. The tradition provides the continuity while we are transformed in the present, as we change for the best possible future.

Although she supports her model with excellent reasoning Moore never directly relates her traditioning model to either ethics or ritual. Stanley Hauerwas provides the best link between story and ethical living. Just as Moore provided much of the "how" of this model of ministry, Hauerwas provides the "why". The link between the traditioning model of ministry and ethics is the story that gives the Christian faith its name. The only way to understand ethics is through narrative and our ethical sense is developed by the true stories that form our life. To allow our true stories to shape our ethical sense is character development. So, to use Moore's model of educational ministry to develop good ethical sense is traditioning for character development. Traditioning for character development is bringing our religious tradition and history into the present in a way that those who are participating make that tradition and history a significant part of their own stories.

Although Christian religious education should permeate the entire life of the church, this model helps to bring education into the church's liturgical life in new and

effective ways. Traditioning for character development makes the church's liturgical life an important catechetical tool. There is evidence that very early Christian liturgies were used catechetically and Westerhoff picks up that theme<sup>2</sup>. If story is as important as this model implies, then the rituals and liturgies of the church must also be important. Westerhoff also argues for the importance of ritual to the Christian, "story formed", community. Liturgies and rituals are where Christian people most regularly expose themselves to and participate in the Biblical story. By being exposed to and participating in the story the congregation is shaped by the story in ways that give them good foundations for ethical living. Our Sunday liturgy is where this kind of exposure and participation happens with regularity. Traditioning for character development is a model of pastoral ministry that provides for the development of good Christian living standards through the most common of all Christian activities, weekly liturgical worship.

The one idea that pulls this model together is story. As people of God, as the body of Christ, we are a story formed community of faith. The Bible and the traditions of the church are the stories that make us who we are. Naming has been an important aspect of Western history

---

<sup>2</sup>John H. Westerhoff, III, A Pilgrim People (New York: Seabury Press, 1984)

for centuries. Naming and names confer more than just identity. There is power in names and power in the one who does the naming. We have named ourselves Christians. The name we have assumed is powerful and it is more than simply a name. Being Christian means that the whole history and the story of Christ and Christianity are now our story. By assuming Christ's name we take on the identity of God present on earth. As Christians we are the people of God and being the people of God is not only a great privilege and gift, it is also an awesome responsibility. The challenge is to live as if we believed that we are in fact the Body of Christ. We must not make "being God" supersessionary in any way, but attempt to imitate the love, justice, mercy, righteousness, and possibly the strength in faith of the one who became God present in human form. Letting the Biblical story shape our lives is not easy, though it is simple. We are called to follow and all we have to do is follow. But following the call of the Biblical story may be the most difficult task, especially in today's world.

One of the most significant insights that I have gained from doing this project is the two fold nature of assuming the name Christian. Bringing the story and history into the present in a way that really makes it a part of ones own story is to begin to understand that not only is God love but that God calls the people of God to be the

manifestation of that love in the world. One of the most difficult responsibilities of the Christian people is really letting the story take charge of their lives and live the lifestyle that the story suggests.

The story calls for radical change but it also calls for loving understanding and neither one of these is any more important than the other. God loves us whether we are living the way that God would have us live or not. The love that we are called to manifest is that same understanding, radical, and undeserved love that God gives us. Living this love in our world, with the threat of nuclear holocaust and with rampant economic oppression, is not easy. But the story does not tell us that living as a story formed community is going to be easy.

Although some of the implications of ministry done in this style have been explored, the entire shape of pastoral ministry in this model is not clear. As was mentioned in the introduction, it seems that pastoral ministry with an educational focus, done as traditioning for character development, is a sound model that can address all the different aspects of pastoral ministry. The only way to truly explore this contention is to attempt to be a pastor and use this model of ministry. That has not happened as yet. The hope is that this model will provide a foundation upon which a good educationally focussed pastoral ministry can be based. It is not meant to replace any other forms of

ministry but rather to compliment or supplement them as all the ministers in the church attempt to do God's work in the world.

The questions that are being left unanswered are many in number and could take the discussion in many directions. Those questions are not being left unanswered because they are unimportant but because many, if not most of them, need to be answered in practice. None of what is proposed here is considered absolute; practice may change some or many of these assumptions. This project is merely a proposal for ministry to be revised, reshaped, and reformed as the stories of the Bible and the people come together with the pastor's story and ministry takes place.

One important question that thinking in terms of story has raised is, What does this model have to say to a person who has either rejected the story or does not share the story? For one who does not share the history and tradition the story no longer provides the foundation for ethical living, or so it might be argued. For one who has consciously rejected the church and its teaching, the lack of foundation may be manifested in conscious selection non-Christian solutions to problems. It might also be argued that, although one rejects the tradition and history, one cannot reject all the formational work that was accomplished by being raised in the tradition. Another suggestion is that the story in itself provides education

that deals with rejection. Either way, this project has not addressed how this model of ministry deals with the person who is outside the tradition, for what ever reason.

Another area that may need to be explored further, in the future, is the centrality of God. The entire focus of this project has been the centrality of the story, but the story is centered on God. Although the story is important it is only important because it is God's story. Worship is our way of participating in our history and tradition but here again the participation is only important because it brings us into a more full, community relationship with God.

Being in right relationship with God is more than simply knowing and believing in God's story. One thing that educating through story cannot provide is religious experience. To truly be in right relationship with God one must know God through experience. There is no guarantee that one will have an experience in which he or she can identify and know God simply by using this model of ministry. The story that is central, the Biblical story, is about God and humanity's experience of God. The hope that is implicit in this model of ministry is that by being exposed to the religious experience of many who have gone before we will come to recognize God in our lives and see the pervasive nature of religious experience.

One's relationship with God is often referred to as



spirituality. This project has not explored how this model of ministry will facilitate spiritual growth. Ritual and liturgy are often considered worship but one can do both ritual and liturgy without ever reaching the plain of worship. Worship implies a certain level of relationship between God and the congregation. From the perspective of the individual, this level of relationship is spirituality. Pastoring through the model of traditioning for character development should also develop personal and congregational spirituality. Spirituality and worship are subjects that are directly related to a relationship with or the experience of God. Although these areas are not covered in any depth, they are goals of this model of ministry.

Sin and redemption are important aspects of the story that forms us and the project has not addressed either. The Sin that is tearing the world apart is primarily social in its nature. Our individual sins may reflect the foundations of our ethical thinking but the strife that is present in our world is often caused by assumptions about right living that are never examined. We often participate in oppressive structures without ever consciously knowing. Most often it is the unconscious participation in Sin that creates the most tremendous forms of oppression. The story calls us to examine life and discover where we participate in this kind of Sin.

One of the primary goals of using traditioning for

character development as a model of ministry is to become more aware of our participation in world-wide structures of Sin. The hope is that through right living, living in tune with God through the Biblical story, the world will become a better place for everyone. For story formed attitudes of living, like justice and non-oppressive living, to become prevalent significant change is necessary. The hope is that we truly become a polity that is shaped by the story of our God.

As we take a hard look at the world today, with all the oppression and with the threat of nuclear holocaust, despair can become a problem every bit as great as any other. The story also holds hope of a better future where these threats are no longer important. A world where there is truly peace on earth, peace with wholeness of life, is a world where people live as if they were really living in the Kingdom of God. We cannot bring the Kingdom into being but we can live as if it were realized. Again Baxter's call from the past becomes important. For people to begin to live as if the Kingdom of God is at least partially realized, pastors must become educators. We need to work for a world where all people have the chance to be whole persons. The call has become crucial in today's world.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baxter, Richard. The Reformed Pastor . London: SCM Press, 1956.
- Cobb, John B., Jr. and David Ray Griffin. Process Theology . Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976.
- Dix, Gregory. The Shape of the Liturgy . New York: Seabury Press, 1982.
- Fant, Clyde E. Preaching for Today . San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1975
- Groome, Thomas H. Christian Religious Education . San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. A Community of Character . Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Character and the Christian Life . San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1975.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Truthfulness and Tragedy . Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Vision and Virtue . Notre Dame: Fides/Claretian, 1974.
- Irwin, Paul. "Definition of Christian Education." An unpublished class handout, 1961.
- Jenson, Richard. Telling the Story . Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980.
- Jenson, Robert W. Story and Promise . Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973
- Mack, Burton. "Seminar: The New Testament As Our Story." Impact Number 5 (1980)
- Moore, Mary Elizabeth. Education for Continuity and Change . Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983.
- Simon, Ulrich. Story and Faith . London: SPCK, 1975.
- Warford, Malcolm. The Necessary Illusion . Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1976.
- Westerhoff, III, John H. A Pilgrim People . New York: Seabury Press, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and William H. Willimon. Liturgy and Learning through the Life Cycle . New York: Seabury Press, 1980.